

## Student Union Works Toward Move-In Day

By KELLY CLARK

After almost four years in the making, the Duxbury Student Union Association is only months away from moving into the Wright Building and becoming fully functional.

One of the DSUA directors, Debby Jewell, said that even though students were excited when the idea was originally proposed, the town was unsure that kids would utilize the space. "We surveyed over 700 students and that's how we've kind of fashioned our plan," Jewell said.

For the past three years, the DSUA has been running events and trying to raise funds through a pledging program at the same time. After getting the OK from the Board of Selectmen to establish the Student Union in the Wright Building last fall, Jewell said they stopped their events to focus on raising the over \$50,000 necessary for the renovations.

"We worry we're losing our fun base since we're not running continuous events," Jewell said.

With two big fundraisers planned for the coming months, Jewell hopes to work toward their goal of raising \$500,000, which she projects will allow the DSUA to get up and running for five years. These funds will go toward hiring directors, buying equipment and paying for the cost of building renovations, among other things.

While the DSUA has been asking for pledges from local residents, Jewell also hopes to get commitments from private corporate sponsors. "Our long-term goal is that we raise half before we go into the building in the winter with some commitment about the rest," Jewell said.

The idea behind the pledging method of fundraising is to secure a commitment and Jewell said they haven't asked for the money yet before they reach the halfway point, which would mark their move into the Wright Building.

This has caused some friction between the DSUA and the Board of Selectmen, which wanted the building renovation



The Sons of Blues, a band formed by Duxbury students, rocks out during the 2006 Fourth of July parade. The band will be performing at a DSUA fundraiser on Aug. 18.

money by a June 30 deadline.

"The problem was that they didn't tell us until about a month prior," Jewell said.

Board of Selectmen Chairwoman Betsy Sullivan said the amount that the DSUA had to pay by the June 30 deadline was \$19,752. She said this total was the amount cleared by the end of this past fiscal year. The grand total for proposed modifications is \$52,996 and while Sullivan said the Board of Selectmen has sent out a letter to the DSUA, they are awaiting a response and have not received any of the money owed.

While Jewell said they only have about one third of the \$50,000 raised, they don't have the building yet and therefore have no lease or legal documents to solidify where pledges will go.

"That's not a fiscally responsible thing to do with people's money," Jewell said. "We've been pressing the town for months for a legal agreement because we have no way of getting that money back if it doesn't come through."

"I'm sure it's hard for them since the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society is an established organization," Jewell said. "We're brand new...we're not functioning until we get this building."

The fundraiser that Jewell hopes will push the DSUA toward its goal is a concert by the James Montgomery Blues Band on Aug. 18. According to a DSUA press release, James Montgomery has played with such superstars as Aerosmith, Bruce Springsteen, the Allman Brothers, Bonnie Raitt and Kid

Rock.

The opening act for the concert at the Duxbury Performing Arts Center will be the Sons of Blues, formed by Duxbury students in 2005. The Sons of Blues has played in local battle of the bands competitions as well as at the Fourth of July parade for the past two years.

The event starts at 8 p.m.; tickets are \$35 for adults and \$20 for students and can be purchased at Westwinds Bookshop and Farfar's. For those interested in meeting the band, a pre-concert event will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Duxbury Art Complex Museum. Tickets for this "Meet and Greet" fundraiser are \$75 and include premium, upfront concert seats.

When the DSUA moves into the Wright Building, Jewell said it will be similar to a student union on a college campus. "On a college campus, it really is the hub and where most of the student activities groups meet," Jewell said.

Akin to a college student union, the Wright Building would include middle school and high school lounges; space to host events like coffeehouses, movies and lectures; study and conference rooms for group meetings; and hopefully a bookstore where students can buy tickets to concerts, football games and other events.

"There's so much potential for who knows what kind of activities—whatever the kids will come up with," Jewell said. She said it would be neat to see an art gallery where the students are the curators, and the DSUA has left space for a radio and video station.

"We did research on youth risky behavior," Jewell said. "You don't have to drive to Plymouth or Marshfield. It's safe and it's there—it has so many little benefits and big benefits."

Jewell said many other towns already have teen centers, including Hingham and Falmouth, which just opened its center within the last few years.

"The hardest part right now is ironing that stage out with the town but it will be a great asset to the town once it's up and running," Jewell said.



The Duxbury Student Union Association float makes its way down Washington Street during the 2006 Fourth of July parade and shows off its slogan, "Keeping Sight of Duxbury's Future."